

CONGRESSMAN  
**Rick Boucher**



**Ninth District  
Virginia**

***Annual Congressional Activities  
Report for 2004***



# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

December 2004

Dear Community Leader:

Each year at this time, I am pleased to provide a comprehensive report of my major activities in the Congress during the preceding year which are directed toward improving the quality of life in Southwest Virginia.

The annual report is designed for community leaders in the Ninth District who have taken a larger than average interest in this work and who have participated with me in achieving these successes.

My highest priority is the creation of new jobs for the region. Highlighted in the report is the progress made in the last year in the multi-faceted strategy to enhance economic development in the many sectors of Southwest Virginia's economy, including attracting technology-based jobs to the region, encouraging the formation of small businesses, improving transportation, expanding tourism, obtaining funding for community infrastructure projects, advancing the telecommunications network and supporting the regional farm economy.

I am also pleased to note the greater benefits we are receiving through the innovative use of information technology. We now have more hospitals and clinics equipped with broadband-connected telemedicine capabilities than any other Congressional district in the nation, and the fiber optic based distance learning network provides instruction in advanced courses in 55 electronic classrooms throughout the district.

I hope you will take a few minutes to review the report. Your comments on the matters it contains and your suggestions for new projects to advance the quality of life of Southwest Virginians will be most welcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Boucher".

RICK BOUCHER  
Member of Congress

# **I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: MY TOP PRIORITY**

## **A. SHOWCASING SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA**

Since its inception in 1987, my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program has stimulated the region's economy by bringing more than 4,000 jobs to the Ninth District. The program's successes continued in 2004:

1. **AT&T Wireless Call Center Hires Nearly 400** – Nearly 400 jobs have been created in Russell County in the year since the new AT&T Wireless Customer Service Center opened its doors in the Town of Lebanon in June of 2003. The company agreed to locate the new facility in Russell County after visiting our region through my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program.
2. **Verizon Call Center Creates New Jobs in Wise County** – At my urging, Verizon Communications in 2003 opened a customer service center in Wise County's Lonesome Pine Regional Business and Technology Park. Since that time, the company has hired 45 workers at the facility and plans to create a total of 60 new jobs in Wise County.
3. **Showcasing Southwest Virginia Tours Promote Region to Technology Companies** – In 2004, my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program focused primarily on the attraction of technology-based companies to the region. I hosted tours for corporate executives of six well known telecommunications companies who visited the Ninth District at my invitation during the year. My goal is to encourage a range of businesses such as database management, software design, reservations operations, polling firms, directory assistance centers and technical support services to invest in Southwest Virginia. The attraction of these companies will be a continuing priority in 2005.
4. **Showcasing Southwest Virginia Tours Promote Region for Development of Coal-Fired Power Facility** – Attraction to our region of a coal-fired power generating facility that utilizes new clean-coal technologies presents an excellent opportunity for Southwest Virginia. A coal-fired plant will generate hundreds of jobs for local residents while assuring a long-term market for Southwest Virginia coal. Such a plant will entail a large capital investment in the coal-producing region of Virginia. In 2004, my Showcasing Southwest Virginia Program conducted tours of potential power plant sites for two companies that plan to build coal-fired generation facilities in the near future.

## **B. TOURISM: A MAJOR SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA POTENTIAL**

A major focus of my office's economic development agenda is the expansion of Southwest Virginia's tourism economy which has tremendous growth potential. With the state's best outdoor experience and Virginia's most interesting cultural offerings, we truly have much to attract the traveling public.

1. **Ralph Stanley Museum and Traditional Music Center Opens in Clintwood** – In late October, I participated in the grand opening of the Ralph Stanley Museum and Traditional Music Center which received significant federal support. At my request, \$725,000 in federal funding was awarded for the development of the Museum in Clintwood's historic Chase House. The construction of the Ralph Stanley Museum appropriately honors one of Dickenson County's leading citizens and will bring many visitors to Clintwood with benefits for Dickenson County's growing tourism economy.
2. **Federal Funding Provided for the Development of the "Crooked Road: Southwest Virginia's Heritage Music Trail"** – I recently announced a \$29,000 federal grant to print and distribute travel guides for the Southwest Virginia Heritage Music Trail, "The Crooked Road." The travel guides will feature two compact discs with information about the sites along the Trail and examples of Appalachian Music. Once completed, the Trail will traverse Patrick, Floyd, Carroll, Grayson, Washington, Scott, Lee, Wise and Dickenson Counties and the Cities of Galax, Bristol and Norton with road signs marking the sites of significance in the region's musical history.
3. **Final Phase of the Blue Ridge Music Center Nearing Completion** – Construction for the final phase of the Blue Ridge Music Center project at Fishers Peak in Carroll and Grayson Counties is expected to be complete in the spring of next year. The Center is a federally funded project which commemorates the historical roots of traditional American music in the Blue Ridge Mountains. At my request, the U.S. Congress has appropriated more than \$13 million in federal funding for the Center. Phase I of the project, which includes an outdoor amphitheater that seats more than 2,000 individuals, picnic facilities and visitor parking, is complete and has been in use since 2001. The Visitors' Center which is now under construction is the second and final phase of the project. One wing of the Visitors' Center will feature an exhibit gallery. In the facility's opposite wing, an auditorium will allow visitors to view educational movies and interpretive talks regarding traditional mountain music and will provide an excellent setting for smaller concerts at the Music Center complex.
4. **House Approves \$4 Million for Daniel Boone Visitors' and Exposition Center in Scott County** – At my request, the House of Representatives has approved \$4 million to build the Daniel Boone Visitors' and Agricultural Exposition Center in Scott County.

The Visitors' and Expo Center will house an exhibit area featuring Daniel Boone and Revolutionary era archives pertaining to the region, a library and a theater. The Center will also host a wide range of agricultural shows and programs, exhibitions of various kinds, and large group meetings and conferences for which no sufficient facility currently exists in Scott County or the surrounding region.

5. **Chateau Morrisette** – Earlier this year, I announced a \$177,860 low-interest loan for the development of a water system at Chateau Morrisette in Meadows of Dan. The new water system will enable the winery to expand its flourishing operations. The loan to Chateau Morrisette is being made through our Ninth District tourism fund which was created using a \$1.5 million appropriation. The Fund, which is administered through People, Inc., is used to assist tourism development projects throughout the Ninth District.
6. **Funding Provided for Repairs and Expansion of Carter Family Fold** – In September, I announced a \$500,000 federal grant to the Carter Family Music Center to make improvements to, and increase the capacity of, the Carter Family Fold. The federal funding will be used to replace the existing seats at the Fold and construct an additional tier which will increase the capacity of the amphitheater by 200 seats. In addition, the roof will be replaced, the wiring and heating systems will be upgraded and new parking and vending areas will be constructed. The federal funding will also be used to rehabilitate the A. P. Carter Store and Museum and relocate the A. P. Carter homeplace cabin to the Carter Fold site.
7. **House Approves Federal Funding to Develop Glen Alton Recreation Area in Giles County** – At my urging, the U.S. House of Representatives has approved \$1.6 million to develop the historic Glen Alton property which is located in the Jefferson National Forest in Giles County. Plans include restoration of the existing structures, the construction of two separate trail systems, a children's playground and picnic and barbeque areas, expansion of the camping facilities and other tourist amenities including two parking areas and a large restroom facility.
8. **Crab Orchard Museum and Pioneer Park to Undergo Expansion** – At my request, the federal government is providing a grant in the amount of \$100,000 to expand the Historic Crab Orchard Museum and Pioneer Park in Tazewell County. The federal monies will be used to construct additional space at the Museum to enable larger tour groups and more visitors to utilize the Museum's facilities.
9. **Wooden Trestle Improvements Being Made along Virginia Creeper Trail** – At my urging, the federal government provided \$750,000 to repair and upgrade trestles of the Virginia Creeper Trail between the Towns of Abingdon and Damascus. Repairs are now

being made to the decking, ring walls, handrails and rail barricades, and it is expected that all of the trestles undergoing repairs will be rebuilt and made safe by the spring of 2005. I am now seeking additional federal funds to add restroom facilities and additional parking along the route of the Virginia Creeper Trail.

10. **City of Radford Proclaimed the “New River Heritage City”** – I recently participated in the formal designation of the City of Radford as the New River Heritage City. The designation was made to recognize the significance of the New River in the development of the City of Radford as we know it today. The designation will assist the City in obtaining federal funding for tourism projects, including the development of the New River Heritage Museum.
11. **William King Regional Arts Center in Abingdon Receives Federal Boost** – In October, I announced three federal grants totaling \$68,775 which are being provided to the William King Regional Arts Center. Each of the federal grants are supporting projects which will enhance the tourist appeal of the Arts Center by developing exhibitions and expanding the gift sales of the Center.
12. **Ownership of Boissevain Coal Miners’ Memorial Museum and Park Transferred to Tazewell County** – I participated earlier this year in the formal transfer of ownership of the Boissevain Coal Miners’ Memorial Museum and Park to Tazewell County. The Park property boasts two large picnic pavilions, walking trails, an outdoor stage and public restroom facilities which received federal funds in previous years. It currently serves as a major community asset for family reunions and other events. The transfer of ownership to Tazewell County was made in order to enable further development and expansion of the Park’s amenities. I will be working closely with Tazewell County officials as future plans for the Memorial Museum and Park take shape to ensure that all appropriate federal resources are made available for the project.
13. **Birch Knob Recreation Area Opens in Dickenson County** – Earlier this year, I joined with Dickenson County officials in opening the newly refurbished Birch Knob Recreation Area. In the late 1990’s, I climbed Birch Knob and immediately recognized its potential as a major tourist attraction for Dickenson County. I then obtained \$250,000 from the federal government to develop the site. After several years of construction, the new Birch Knob Recreation Area has been transformed into a premiere tourist destination in Dickenson County while preserving the pristine landscape of the area.
14. **Federal Funding Approved to Develop Stonewall Square in Town of Abingdon** – In late September, I announced a federal grant in the amount of \$100,000 to the Barter Foundation for the development of Stonewall Square. Once constructed, Stonewall

Square will occupy a full city block across from the Barter Theatre. The complex will provide space for approximately 25 business and retail locations which will attract additional tourists to the Town. The retail shops and other businesses which will be located at Stonewall Square will be geared towards arts, crafts and culinary specialties which highlight the region's Appalachian heritage.

15. **Task Force Established to Plan Development of Rocky Knob Site in Floyd and Patrick Counties** – At my request, the House of Representatives has approved the provision of \$1.5 million to be used for tourism development at Rocky Knob which is located along the Blue Ridge Parkway in Patrick and Floyd Counties. The federal funding will facilitate the development of the Rocky Knob site. In 2004 I assembled an advisory committee comprised of community leaders from both Patrick and Floyd counties for the purpose of planning a facility which will boost the tourism economy of both counties.

### C. ENCOURAGING SMALL BUSINESS FORMATION

1. **Incubators Let New Businesses Share Costs and Obtain Technical Assistance** – In 1998, I created regional planning task forces and launched a Ninth District-wide effort to build small business incubators as a means of expanding the number of locally-owned small businesses in the region. The construction of small business incubators within the reach of all residents will assure that technical assistance and the opportunity to reduce start-up costs are available to each person who wants to bring his or her good ideas to the commercial market. In 2004, these projects advanced:
  - ***Virginia Highlands Incubator Nearing Completion:*** Construction is nearing completion on the new Virginia Highlands small business incubator, the first building to be located in Abingdon's new Stonemill Business and Technology Park. At my request, the federal government has provided \$1.9 million in federal grant funding for the project. The incubator will encourage the birth of locally owned technology-related small businesses. It is a joint venture among Washington County, the City of Bristol and the Town of Abingdon. The completed incubator will house 33 individual offices, 4 office suites and 4 manufacturing spaces.
  - ***Jacksonville Center Receives Additional Federal Support:*** The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency this year provided federal funding totaling \$183,300 for the further development of the Jacksonville Center in Floyd County. The newly awarded federal funds are being used for several construction and renovation projects which are taking place at the facility.

- ***Crossroads Institute in Galax Nearing Completion:*** At my request, more than \$5 million has been provided for the construction of the Crossroads Institute in the City of Galax. The facility, which is currently under construction, will serve as a small business incubator and promote continued education and workplace training for the residents of Carroll, Grayson, Wythe, Smyth and Bland Counties and the City of Galax. Construction for the Crossroads Institute is expected to be complete within the next six months.
  - ***Blacksburg Incubator Under Construction:*** A small business incubator costing \$6 million is under construction at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Park in Blacksburg. At my request, \$2 million of that amount was supplied by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The facility will focus on launching technology-oriented businesses.
2. **Additional Incubators Planned for the Ninth District** – I am currently working with community leaders in a number of counties and cities to plan additional incubator facilities. I will be urging the award of federal funding in 2005 for these projects:
- ***Alleghany County/City of Covington:*** I have been working with Alleghany County and City of Covington officials to develop a small business incubator which will serve both Alleghany County and the City of Covington. A feasibility study has recently been completed for the development of the facility, marking the first step in establishing a small business incubator for Alleghany County and the City of Covington.
  - ***Dickenson County:*** Dickenson County leaders are currently planning a specialty incubator. The facility will focus on small businesses which prepare food products.
  - ***Buchanan and Russell Counties:*** A recently completed feasibility study recommends the construction of incubators in Buchanan and Russell Counties. During 2005, I will seek federal funding for these facilities as well.
3. **Encouraging Localities to Build Technology Parks** – I am encouraging Ninth District localities to build a new generation of industrial parks that will prove attractive to technology-based companies as a means of diversification for the region's economic base. The technology parks will have advanced communications capabilities, open spaces, walking paths and other amenities appropriate for technology-oriented companies. A series of technology parks has been completed, and others are either under construction or being planned:



- ***Stonemill Business and Technology Park:*** Construction is nearly complete for the Stonemill Business and Technology Park in Abingdon. \$500,000 in federal grant assistance has been used to construct an access road to the new Park, and very soon, technology-related small businesses may begin moving into the new Park.
  - ***Lebanon Technology Park:*** Earlier this year, Phase One of construction for the Lebanon Technology Park was completed using \$1 million in federal funding which I secured. 32 acres of the 114-acre park site have been developed and are ready for the construction and placement of new business facilities on the property. Public water, sewer, three-phase power and natural gas service have been extended to the park site. An access road has also been constructed through the Park.
4. **Revolving Loan Fund Established for Small Businesses in Big Stone Gap** – A federal grant in the amount of \$99,500 has been approved for the Town of Big Stone Gap to establish a revolving loan fund for small businesses located within the Town. Loans will be made to small businesses for as much as \$10,000 through the Fund, and the loan funds can be used for a wide range of business expansion and improvement projects.
  5. **New River Valley Development Corporation Expands Revolving Loan Fund to Encourage Business Investment** – At my request, a \$50,000 federal grant is being provided to expand the revolving loan fund of the New River Valley Development Corporation. Loans will be made to small businesses for the purchase of equipment, buildings, land or property improvements with special preference given to those applicants who will use the loan monies to create jobs.
  6. **New River Valley Planning District Commission Receives Federal Grant to Assist Small Businesses** – In May, I announced a federal grant in the amount of \$46,000 to the New River Valley Planning District Commission to establish a technical assistance program tailored to small businesses in Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski Counties and the City of Radford. The federal funding will be used to expand the Small Business and Downtown Development Assistance project, which is already in existence in Giles County, to provide business counseling and other assistance to the businesses which are located in downtown areas. The funding allocation will enable the establishment of the program in other New River Valley communities.

#### **D. FARM ECONOMY SUPPORTED**

1. **Congress Passes Tobacco Buyout** – My efforts in partnership with other tobacco area members of Congress have produced a new law broadly benefiting burley tobacco

farming families and the communities in which they reside. The tobacco buyout will inject \$133 million into the Ninth District's economy and compensate tobacco farmers for the losses they have sustained because of the foreign tobacco buying practices of the major cigarette manufacturers.

2. **Hair Sheep Production Represents a New Opportunity for Farmers** – I have obtained a commitment from a locally-owned food retailer with more than 80 stores in the region to purchase ten thousand lambs annually from local hair sheep producers. Current local production of hair sheep is far below that number, and the commitment provides a guaranteed market which can now be enjoyed by hundreds of additional hair sheep producers. In September, I hosted a well-attended conference in Abingdon, during which speakers described the economics of hair sheep production, practicalities of raising hair sheep on a farm and the mechanism for taking hair sheep produced lamb to market in our area. Whether farmers are engaged in tobacco, beef cattle or dairy production, they now have an opportunity to add hair sheep production to diversify their operations and increase their income. Anyone desiring information concerning the opportunity which the production of hair sheep creates should contact their local extension office.
3. **Virginia Farm Bureau Honors** – In December 2003, I was presented with the Virginia Farm Bureau's Gold Congressional Leadership Award for my efforts to promote Southwest Virginia's agriculture economy in Congress. The Gold Award is the highest level of recognition conferred by the Virginia Farm Bureau.

## **E. INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT**

1. **Funding in 2004 Gives More Southwest Virginians Access to Water and Wastewater Services** – In 2004, more than \$42 million in federal funding was awarded to construct and improve drinking water systems and public wastewater systems throughout Southwest Virginia. Obtaining the federal funding to place publicly provided drinking water in Southwest Virginia homes is a high priority of my office. More than 4,100 Southwest Virginia homes will receive new or improved publicly provided drinking water or sewer service as a result of projects launched with federal funds in 2004. In 2005, I will be seeking a comparable level of federal funding for further system development.
2. **Grundy Flood Control and Redevelopment Project on Track and On Schedule** – For the seventh consecutive year, the federal government is making a major investment in the Grundy Flood Control and Redevelopment Project. At my request, the Congress has approved \$6 million in direct Congressional appropriations to construct the ringwall,

fund voluntary floodproofing and acquisition projects, and complete construction on the vehicular access bridge between the redevelopment site and the existing town. In 2004, site preparation for the redevelopment area was finished, and the redevelopment site was officially turned over to the Town of Grundy to begin constructing the new downtown area. The Grundy project will bring major flood control improvements, new highway construction and a large new commercial redevelopment center which will give an economic boost to Grundy and to Buchanan County.

3. **Dickenson Childcare Center Opens** – In July, I participated in the grand opening of the federally funded Dickenson Childcare Center. The \$1.4 million facility was funded entirely through federal grants which were provided at my request. The Center, which is 10,000 square feet in size, is the first licensed daycare center in Dickenson County and has the capacity to care for up to 107 children.
4. **House Approves Funds for Clifton Forge** – At my request, the House approved a federal allocation of \$2.7 million to rehabilitate the Clifton Forge Rail Yard in Alleghany County for a variety of future industrial uses. When the Senate concurs in this appropriation, Clifton Forge can again become a center of economic development in the county.
5. **Construction Begins for New Dam at Big Cherry Reservoir** – At my request, the federal government has provided more than \$7 million for the construction of a new dam at the Big Cherry Reservoir near Big Stone Gap in Wise County. Construction on the project began earlier this year. The new dam will afford a greater measure of safety to the residents living downstream from the existing dam and will enable the town of Big Stone Gap to increase its water supply and provide water service to thousands more households and businesses in Wise County and beyond. The Town will also earn extra revenue as it sells water from the larger impoundment to the City of Norton and to communities in Lee and Scott Counties.
6. **Craig County Library Opens** – I participated this summer in the formal opening of the Craig County Public Library which is now placed in a temporary location in the old Eans building in New Castle until a permanent library structure is constructed. Earlier this year, the U.S. Congress approved my request for a federal appropriation in the amount of \$125,000 to build a permanent library in Craig County. Currently, plans are being developed to construct the permanent building.
7. **Kim Stan Clean-up Project Advances** – At my request, \$2.3 million in federal funding is being provided to construct a pipeline from the Kim Stan Landfill to the Low Moor Wastewater Treatment plant in Alleghany County. The pipeline will remove contaminated wastewater from the landfill and send it to the wastewater treatment facility

where the polluted water will be treated to remove its contaminants. I am now seeking funding to place a cap on the landfill to prevent rainwater intrusion from contaminating the surface and ground water.

8. **New Post Office Opens in Ivanhoe** – During the summer, I joined Ivanhoe residents for the grand opening of the new post office in the community. The new post office offers a full line of postal products and services and contains 120 post office boxes. My office worked closely with the Ivanhoe community and with the U.S. Postal Service to save the community's post office.
9. **Dante Community to Open a Community and Cultural Center** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency is providing a federal grant in the amount of \$21,000 to the Dante Lives On organization to enable the renovation and rehabilitation of the Old Bank Building and Beer Garden into a Community and Cultural Center for Dante. Final plans for the facility are still being developed, but the organization intends to use the Old Bank Building as both a community gathering place and a cultural center to preserve the history of the coal mining and railroad influences which shaped the Dante community.
10. **Federal Funding Enables Regional Water and Wastewater Studies** – Two federal grants totaling \$130,000 are enabling the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission to conduct a regional wastewater study in the coal-producing counties and to assist the Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell, and Tazewell County governments in their efforts to obtain federal, state and private grant and loan funds for new water and sewer projects. Separately, a \$48,000 federal grant to the Lenowisco Planning District Commission will enable the PDC to provide assistance to the local governments of Lee, Scott and Wise Counties and the City of Norton for the development of new water and wastewater projects.
11. **Town of Bluefield Receives Federal Grant to Continue Flood Mitigation Efforts** – Earlier this year, I announced a federal grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the amount of \$98,359 to the Town of Bluefield as further assistance for the flooding problems experienced in the Town. The federal funds are enabling the Town to purchase and demolish the Old Corner Service Station which is located in the downtown portion of Bluefield and has experienced repeated flooding problems.
12. **Federal Funding Will Replace Roof at the Craig Childcare Center** – Federal funds are being made available to the Craig County Childcare Center to replace the facility's roof which has experienced several leaks. The original flat roof will be replaced with a new slanted roof.

13. **Norton's Storm Drainage System to Undergo Upgrades** – A low-interest federal loan in the amount of \$2,593,000 is being provided to the City of Norton to make improvements to portions of its storm drainage system. New storm drains and other necessary components will be installed in the City to improve and expand the existing storm drainage system. Once the work is completed, the system will have expanded capacity to protect Norton residents and their property from the damage experienced due to heavy rainfall.
14. **Communities Receive Federal Assistance for Broadband Projects** – More than ten years ago, I began encouraging local governments throughout the Ninth District to find a means of deploying broadband networks so that affordable high-speed Internet access would be available to businesses and residents throughout our region. My goal in making this recommendation was to set our region apart in comparison to other rural areas in the nation with the goal of making us more attractive to the new industry that requires access to broadband networks, and to create technology-based jobs for Southwest Virginians. In 2004, federal funding has been used to support the following broadband projects:
- ***Dickenson:*** In September, I announced a federal grant in the amount of \$24,120 to expand the Dickenson County Wireless Integrated Network (DCWIN) to the Red Onion Community of Dickenson County. Currently, DCWIN is providing access to high-speed Internet services to more than 150 residential and business customers in Dickenson County, including the Dickenson County Technology Park.
  - ***Henry/Patrick:*** At my urging, the federal government is providing a \$6 million grant to enable the deployment of a fiber optic backbone along U.S. Route 58 beginning at Meadows of Dan and extending across Patrick County into Henry County and beyond. The establishment of a fiber optic backbone is the first step in bringing broadband services, including high-speed Internet access to all residents and businesses in Henry and Patrick Counties.
  - ***Grundy:*** In August, I joined with Town of Grundy officials in the formal launch of the Grundy Wireless Network. The Network utilizes the very latest in wireless technology, commonly known as pre-WiMAX, for the delivery of affordable high-speed wireless Internet access to residents and businesses within the Grundy community. Future phases of the Grundy Wireless Network are already under development and will use federal funding I acquired in 2003 to extend the Network beyond the Town limits.
  - ***Carroll/Patrick/Wythe:*** Earlier this year, I announced a federal loan in the amount of \$11.7 million to Citizens Cablevision to establish high-speed Internet access in

portions of Carroll, Patrick and Wythe Counties. The localities which will receive access to the new broadband technology include: Dugspur, Mitchell's Crossroads, Rakestown and Sheeptown in Carroll County; Meadows of Dan and Vesta in Patrick County; and Austinville, Barren Springs, Fort Chiswell, Ivanhoe and Max Meadows in Wythe County.

- ***Russell/Tazewell:*** Earlier this year, I participated in the launch of construction to deploy a fiber optic backbone from Abingdon along Route 19 into Russell County to the Cumberland Plateau Regional Industrial Park in Lebanon. From Lebanon, the fiber optic backbone will be deployed along U.S. Routes 19 and 460 to the small business incubator in Richlands. The fiber deployment is the first step in establishing broadband telecommunications services, including high-speed Internet access for the residents of Russell and Tazewell Counties. \$1.65 million in federal funds which I obtained is financing the project, and I am currently working to secure funds to extend the fiber optic backbone along U.S. Routes 19 and 460 from Richlands to Bluefield and along Route 460 from Richlands to Grundy.
- ***Carroll:*** Additional federal funding in the amount of \$69,520 has been allocated to the Carroll County Industrial Development Authority to conduct an extensive feasibility study in order to develop a strategic plan for deploying high-speed Internet access to all of Carroll County. The study will identify the community and private investments which will be required to develop a comprehensive broadband infrastructure, and its findings will serve as the basis for our future efforts to establish broadband services for all Carroll County residents.
- ***Giles:*** Earlier this year, I announced federal funding in the amount of \$2.9 million to establish high-speed Internet services to the households and businesses between the communities of Pembroke and Newport.
- ***Pulaski:*** The federal government is providing an \$18,000 federal grant to Pulaski County which will be used in collaboration with one or more private Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to extend high-speed Internet access to the communities of Hiwassee, Snowville and Allisonia. The remaining funding which will be needed to establish the Internet services in the communities will be provided by the private ISPs.
- ***Craig:*** I am currently working in partnership with the Craig-Botetourt Rural Electric Cooperative to bring affordable high-speed Internet access to residents and businesses in Craig County. Plans are being developed to create a high-speed data backbone extending by wireless relay from Salem to the Craig-Botetourt Rural Electric Cooperative headquarters in New Castle. I am now seeking federal funding from a variety of different agencies in order to build this high-speed Internet link.

- **Scott:** In June, I announced a low-interest federal loan of more than \$11 million to the Scott County Telephone Cooperative to establish high-speed Internet access in the communities of Clinchport, Duffield, Dungannon, Fort Blackmore, the Williams Mill area of Gate City, Nickelsville and the surrounding communities. In addition to this funding, I announced a federal grant to the Cooperative of nearly \$600,000 to assist the cost of bringing the broadband services to the Nickelsville community of Scott County.

15. **Communities Receive Federal Assistance for Fire Departments** – During 2004, I participated with a number of Ninth District fire departments in the successful effort to obtain \$2,824,489 in federal assistance for the purchase of new equipment. Local fire departments which received federal assistance include: Abingdon, Bassett, Bland, Chilhowie, Clearfork, Clinch Mountain, Clintwood, Draper, Dublin, Fieldale, Fries, Grundy, Haysi, Jasper, Knox Creek, Lebanon, Max Meadows, Patterson, Pearisburg, Pound, Rich Creek, Roanoke County, Rugby, Rural Retreat, Saltville, Selma, Simmonsville, Slate Creek, Stuart, Sugar Grove, Tazewell County, Twin Community, Valley, Whitewood and Wytheville.
16. **Dickenson County Police Departments Receive a Federal Boost** – Three provisions of federal funding in the total amount of \$84,009 were awarded this year to the Clinchco, Clintwood and Haysi Police Departments to assist the Departments in purchasing new police equipment. The federal funds were used to purchase four new police vehicles and other equipment for the three Departments.
17. **City of Radford Secures Federal Grant for Community Development Projects** – A federal grant in the amount of \$248,000 has been awarded to the City of Radford to assist several community development projects in the City. Several non-profit agencies will benefit from the federal grant, and a portion of the funding will be used for infrastructure improvements and a low-income housing assistance project.

## **F. EDUCATION: PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION**

1. **Congress Approves Additional Funding for Virginia Tech's Bioinformatics Institute** – The U.S. Congress has honored my request and has appropriated for the coming year \$3.9 million for the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute at Virginia Tech. This is the fourth year that I have obtained federal funding for Virginia Tech's work in bioinformatics, and the federal appropriations for the project now total nearly \$15 million. As a result of this latest appropriation, the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute will be able to continue its groundbreaking work in creating a common database of information for all agencies involved in the assessment of biological security threats.

2. **Patrick County Education Foundation Funded** – At my urging, the Congress appropriated \$240,000 to the Patrick County Education Foundation. This appropriation brings to \$740,000 the total in federal appropriations made to the Foundation to date. The funds are being applied to the Foundation's efforts to improve the prospects for Patrick County students to attend college. Other Foundation programs help prepare the County's workforce for a range of diverse employment opportunities.
3. **Southwest Virginia Coal Research Program Receives Another Federal Boost** – The Congress, at my request, is providing a special appropriation of \$3 million to the Center for Advanced Separation Technologies (CAST) at Virginia Tech to continue the Center's work in developing leading edge clean coal technologies. CAST works to develop better methods of processing and using fine coal particles for use in power plants. The older processes used to prepare coal for use in power plants results in the discard of small coal particles. The CAST research is enabling the use of these otherwise wasted coal particles with major potential benefits for the coal industry.
4. **Computer Learning and Public Internet Access Site Opens at Newport Community Center** – At my request, a \$49,000 federal grant has funded the purchase and installation of the necessary computer equipment to establish a computer learning laboratory at the Newport Community Center in Giles County. The lab is now equipped with 14 computers, a printer, flatbed scanner and office furniture. The computer lab, which formally opened in October, offers courses to Giles County residents in a variety of computer-related areas and is now serving as a public Internet access site with access to high-speed Internet services.
5. **Southwest Virginia Community College Receives Federal Assistance** – In August, I announced a \$50,000 federal grant to Southwest Virginia Community College (SVCC) in Richlands to establish a call center job training program for residents of Tazewell, Russell, Buchanan and Dickenson Counties. The federal funding will be used by SVCC to establish a simulated call center laboratory which will provide students with the experience and skills necessary to obtain employment in a customer service call center.
6. **Dabney Lancaster Community College to Establish a Packaging Center** – The U.S. Congress at my urging has provided two federal appropriations in the amounts of \$125,000 and \$194,000 to launch the new Virginia Packaging Application Center at the Dabney Lancaster Community College in Clifton Forge. The packaging industry, which is responsible for placing the physical packaging on finished products before they are shipped to retail locations for sale, is rapidly growing. The federal appropriations are being used to design and develop the curriculum for the program.



7. **Federal Grant Approved for Christiansburg Institute** – A \$20,000 federal grant is being provided to the Christiansburg Institute to enable a comprehensive feasibility study to be conducted to develop new education and training programs which will be offered at the Institute. During the course of the study, the Institute's officials will consult with regional economic development and educational institutions to determine which courses are most needed in the New River Valley.
8. **Construction Begins on Lake Estonoa Learning Center** – In September, I participated in the groundbreaking for the Lake Estonoa Learning Center in St. Paul. The federal government is providing nearly 90 percent of the cost of construction for the Center. Once constructed, the Center will be 1,152 square feet in size and will have the capability to accommodate groups of as many as 50 people. The Learning Center will serve as a one-of-a-kind facility dedicated to the protection and development of the wetlands at Lake Estonoa.
9. **Business Development Courses at Dabney Lancaster Community College Funded by a Federal Grant** – The Appalachian Regional Commission is providing a federal grant in the amount of \$35,000 to the Dabney Lancaster Community College in Clifton Forge to provide business development training and classes at the College. The federal funding will be used by Dabney Lancaster's Entrepreneur Resource Center to provide specialized business training to the region's individuals and businesses in an effort to encourage the development of new small businesses and the growth and expansion of existing businesses in Alleghany County and the surrounding area. One-on-one counseling, training workshops and entrepreneurship education classes will all be made available as a part of the project.
10. **Federal Funding Advances Appalachian School of Pharmacy in Grundy** – At my urging, the Congress has appropriated \$500,000 to advance the Appalachian School of Pharmacy in Grundy. With plans to welcome the first class of students in August of 2005, the school is now hiring faculty, refurbishing a building and planning its curriculum. The federal funds will accelerate this work.
11. **Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center to Establish International Business Program** – In April, I announced a federal grant in the amount of \$166,000 to the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon to establish a comprehensive International Business Education Program in conjunction with the University of Virginia's College at Wise, Emory and Henry College, Virginia Intermont College and Virginia Highlands Community College.

12. **Computer Laboratory and Public Internet Access Site Funded for Chilhowie** – At my request, the Appalachian Regional Commission provided a federal grant in October to purchase and install the computer equipment necessary to establish a public Internet access site and computer laboratory at the former Chilhowie High School which now serves as a local branch of the Smyth-Bland Regional Library. The lab is expected to house 19 Windows-based computer workstations which will be available for public use.
13. **Mountain Empire Community College Receives Federal Boost** – The U.S. Department of Education is providing a grant of more than \$1.8 million over five years for new educational technology for the College. The federal funds are being used to develop 25 new Internet-based courses which will enable the institution to significantly broaden its distance learning capabilities. In addition, the College will develop Internet-based career counseling and development resources for use by the students. Faculty will also receive the appropriate training to enable them to integrate the new technologies into their courses.
14. **Emory and Henry College Receives Federal Grant for new Computer and Communications Technology** – I recently announced a federal education grant for Emory and Henry College to introduce new computer and communications technology to the College's faculty and students. The nearly \$1.8 million grant will enable significant upgrades to the College's campus computer network and will enable campus-wide access to the Internet and Campus Intranet. College faculty will receive special training to enable them to utilize the new computer components as part of their course curriculum.

## **G. TRANSPORTATION: THE LINK TO A BROADER ECONOMY**

1. **Federal Funds Provided for Coalfields Expressway** – \$39.5 million in federal grant funding is being provided by the Appalachian Regional Commission to perform design and engineering work along Route 460 in Buchanan County for the Coalfields Expressway. \$21.6 million of the funding will be used to develop engineering plans for a 6.2 mile stretch from Looney's Creek to Bull Gap, and \$17.9 million is being used to develop plans for a connector road on the Coalfields Expressway from the Kentucky state line to the Breaks Interstate Park. In 2005, I will continue my work with Senator John Warner to obtain additional federal money for this much needed highway and the economic benefits its construction will bring.
2. **Federally Funded Route 600 Project in Smyth County nears Completion**—With a total of \$19 million in federal appropriations applied to the new Route 600 project and the final phase of the road under construction, completion of the project is expected in

2005. The road will offer rapid access between Chilhowie and the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area and will help to expand Smyth County's tourism economy.

3. **Improving the Ninth District's Airports** – The presence of well-developed local airports is an essential tool in attracting new employers to the region. In 2004, the following successes were achieved in improving the Ninth District's airports:

- ***Twin County Airport:*** Since 2001, I have obtained a total of \$2.3 million to expand and improve the Twin County Airport serving Carroll and Grayson Counties and the City of Galax. A parallel taxiway has been built, and currently, more than \$1 million is being used to design and construct a widened runway and for the installation of an upgraded lighting system. The latest improvements will enable larger corporate aircraft to make use of the Airport's facilities, making it more of a regional economic development asset.
- ***Virginia Tech Airport:*** At my request, nearly \$1.4 million in federal funding has been provided to expand and improve the Virginia Tech Airport. These federal funds are currently being used to make improvements to the Airport's aircraft parking apron and to install new lighting and aircraft guidance systems.
- ***New River Valley Airport:*** Approximately \$500,000 in federal funding has been approved at my urging to improve the New River Valley Airport near Dublin. \$70,000 is being used to expand the use of the Airport as a Port of Entry and Foreign Trade Zone. \$193,500 is being used to promote business development at the Airport, and \$202,026 has been awarded to develop a new airport improvement and expansion plan.
- ***Blue Ridge Airport:*** This year, I announced two large provisions of federal funding to make improvements at the Blue Ridge Airport in Spencer which serves Henry and Patrick Counties. At my urging, the Congress approved a \$500,000 federal appropriation which will supplement a federal grant in the amount of \$616,959 that I announced earlier this year. The federal monies will be used to expand the West aircraft parking apron at the Airport.
- ***Mountain Empire Airport:*** More than \$1 million in federal funding is being provided at my request to make improvements to the Mountain Empire Airport which serves Smyth and Wythe Counties. The funding will enable the construction of an aircraft parking apron. Previously, more than \$2.5 million in federal funding was allocated to the Mountain Empire Airport for construction of the now completed parallel taxiway.

- ***Tazewell County Airport:*** The Federal Aviation Administration is providing \$1.8 million in federal funding for the Tazewell County Airport. The federal monies will be used to rehabilitate the runway and parking apron.
- ***Virginia Highlands Airport:*** Earlier this year, I announced two provisions of federal funding in the total amount of more than \$1.7 million to construct an aircraft parking apron, taxiway and access road along the West side of the Airport. In addition, the funding is being used to remove obstructions along the aircraft landing approach path. An additional \$1.25 million was awarded in a November Congressional appropriation which will launch a project to extend the runway to accommodate larger corporate jets.
- ***Lee County Airport:*** In April, I announced the provision of a federal grant in the amount of \$45,000 to the Lee County Airport to complete the design of the parallel taxiway at the Airport. One-third of the taxiway is already constructed, and following the completion of the design phase, I will be seeking additional federal funds to complete the construction of the remaining two-thirds of the parallel taxiway.
- ***Buchanan/Dickenson Airport:*** I am now working with local governments in Buchanan and Dickenson Counties to build a large new general aviation airport that will serve both counties and the Breaks Interstate Park. A feasibility study which I commissioned 3 years ago was completed last year, and work has begun this year to site the new facility on land adjacent to the route of the Coalfields Expressway. I will be asking for additional funding for land acquisition and detailed engineering work in 2005.

## **H. NINTH DISTRICT CONGRESSIONAL CONFERENCES CONDUCTED IN 2004**

1. **Ninth District Burley Tobacco Growers' Conference** – In August, many of the region's burley tobacco growers attended my annual conference during which information was provided on the federal tobacco buyout legislation which makes substantial payments to growers and to quota owners. Since that time, the buyout has been approved by both Houses of Congress and signed into law by the President. I am planning to hold another tobacco growers' conference in February of 2005 in order to provide detailed information about how the buyout will be implemented.
2. **Annual Southwestern Virginia Technology Council Dinner** – In May, I hosted in cooperation with the Southwestern Virginia Technology Council the group's annual

dinner meeting. The meeting highlighted the Council's accomplishments during its fourth year and served as a planning session for the group's expanding role in the advancement of technology throughout the region.

3. **Virginia Coal Conference** – In June, in conjunction with the Eastern Coal Council, I hosted a conference addressing matters of importance to the future of Virginia's coal industry and reported on my work as Ranking Member of the Energy and Air Quality Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, including legislation which I introduced to promote the use of coal through the advancement of clean coal technologies.
4. **Conferences on the New Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act** – In March, I hosted two conferences to detail the rural health care benefits which are now available under the new Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act. Participants at the conferences received a detailed overview of the Medicare prescription drug coverage and the particular benefits the legislation provides to our region's rural hospitals, physicians and low-income elderly.
5. **Ninth Congressional District Telecommunications Conference** – In May, I hosted a Conference on Telecommunications with the theme of "Expanding Broadband Access and Services for Businesses and Citizens." The many attendees at the Conference received information on the successes our region has achieved in the effort to become the rural leader nationally in the use of information technology and upcoming opportunities for the use of electronic networks to influence economic development, business advancement, health care, education and personal enjoyment.
6. **Ninth District Conference on Tourism: Toward a New Economy** – In July, I hosted the Ninth District Conference on Tourism. The Ninth District has just begun to realize its tremendous tourism economy potential, and conference participants heard from a wide variety of speakers who discussed ways to expand and develop the tourism economy of Southwest Virginia.
7. **Ninth District Conference on Agriculture: Hair Sheep Production** – In September, I hosted a Ninth District Agriculture Conference entitled "The Economic Opportunity Available to Southwest Virginia's Farming Families through Hair Sheep Production." The focus of the conference was to introduce and increase awareness of an exciting new opportunity which exists for our region's farmers in the production of hair sheep. Conference attendees received a broad range of presentations regarding the promising possibilities involved in the production of hair sheep.

## II. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

As co-founder and co-chairman of the Congressional Internet Caucus and as a senior member of the Committees on Energy and Commerce and the Judiciary, I am deeply involved in the development of the federal policy for telecommunications, intellectual property and the Internet. In 2004, these policy initiatives advanced:

- A. **Digital Media Consumers' Rights Act** – Last January, I introduced legislation backed by a broad coalition of consumer groups and technology companies to preserve the ability of consumers to use digital media in their homes in the manner most convenient to them. Many of the uses that consumers make of music, movies or other content, such as recording tracks from a music CD they have purchased on their computer hard drive, do not violate copyright law. However, a law passed in 1998 took away many of these personal use rights for material delivered in a protected digital format. The legislation I have drafted restores the traditional personal use rights to consumers who lawfully acquire copyrighted works. It also ensures that equipment manufacturers will continue to have the right to design and produce products for which there are substantial lawful uses. Given the intention of some record labels to add technology to CDs that would block people from making personal use copies, the legislation also requires these non-standard CDs to be labeled so that people are aware before purchasing the CD that it cannot be copied. In May, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection held a hearing on my legislation, marking the first step in enacting the measure into law.
- B. **Internet Policy Group Membership Surpasses 180** – With a membership of 182 Representatives and Senators, the bi-partisan, bi-cameral Internet Caucus which I co-founded in 1996 and now co-chair has become the most active caucus in the Congress. It is an increasingly valuable educational forum as Congress addresses a range of policy issues related to the Internet.
- C. **Advanced Internet Communications Services Act** – In the Fall, I introduced legislation which would encourage the rapid deployment of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and other Advanced Internet Communications Services by applying a light regulatory touch to the new technologies. The measure would encourage new investment in VoIP and other advanced Internet-based services. The bill will be the major subject of telecommunications policy discussions in 2005.
- D. **Ninth District Satellite Television Consumers Receive Local Broadcast Channels** – Many residents in the Ninth District live in areas too remote to receive quality local broadcast or cable service. Satellite television is an excellent alternative for these

television consumers, but until recently it has had its disadvantages. Satellite subscribers in Southwest Virginia have not had access to local TV stations which supply important emergency information, sports, weather and local news coverage. I have long urged satellite television providers to begin offering local television stations to satellite TV customers in Southwest Virginia. In 2004, both DISH Network and DirecTV agreed to honor my requests:

- ***DISH Network Extends Local-into-Local For the Bristol Market:*** In February, I announced that EchoStar Communications, the corporation which owns DISH Network, would begin providing ‘local-into-local’ service, through which local broadcast stations are uplinked to the satellite and then retransmitted into the markets of their origination, to satellite television customers in the Bristol-Johnson City-Kingsport market, and the service became available to all users in the Bristol market later that month. Local-into-local service has been available to DISH Network customers in the Roanoke television market since 2003.
- ***DirecTV Provides Local Channels for Subscribers in the Bristol Market:*** The new ‘local-into-local’ service from DirecTV became available in the Bristol market in October. Local broadcasts are also now available to DirecTV customers in the Roanoke television market.
- ***Congress Approves Legislation to Enable Patrick County Residents to Receive Roanoke TV Stations via Satellite Dish:*** The Congress in November approved my legislative proposal which will enable the residents of Patrick County who own satellite television dishes to obtain the Roanoke, Virginia local broadcast stations. The new law will allow those broadcast stations which are deemed to be “significantly viewed” as determined by existing cable television regulations to be retransmitted to satellite television customers. Both NBC (WSLS, Channel 10) and CBS (WDBJ, Channel 7) from Roanoke, in addition to the North Carolina broadcast stations, meet this criteria and will, therefore, be made available to Patrick County satellite television customers.

### **III. HEALTH CARE: IMPROVING ACCESS FOR SOUTHWEST VIRGINIANS**

- A. **Saltville Medical Center is Now a Veterans' Outpatient Clinic** – At my request, the Veterans Administration has opened a new outpatient clinic for veterans at the Saltville Medical Center in Smyth County. With the launch of the Saltville clinic, the 9<sup>th</sup> District now has 13 veterans' outpatient clinics, far more than any other Congressional District in Virginia. The provision of primary care services to veterans on an outpatient basis began on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 in Saltville. The medical care now offered at the outpatient clinic is primary care, including X-rays, general health check ups, blood pressure checks, treatment for basic illnesses and laboratory tests.
- B. **Ninth District Leads Nation in Telemedicine Capability** – For the past several years, I have been obtaining federal funding to establish telemedicine links from hospitals and clinics in the region to the UVA Hospital in Charlottesville. With 50 connected health care facilities, the Ninth District now has more broadband-connected telemedicine sites than any other Congressional district in the nation. Telemedicine enables Southwest Virginia residents to obtain advanced diagnostic services and other forms of specialized care from the UVA Hospital while avoiding the time and expense associated with travel to Charlottesville. Telemedicine opens a new era of medical treatment with access to medical specialists which has previously been unavailable for many rural residents. I am currently working to establish a telemedicine link at the new Haysi Medical Clinic.
- C. **Haysi Medical Clinic Now Open** – One of my highest priorities is assuring that all Ninth District residents have easy access to quality medical care. Over the past 3 years, \$2.5 million in federal funding has been obtained for the development and construction of the health facility, and the Clinic is now open to serve the public. The clinic provides laboratory, mental health, dental, X-ray and Black Lung clinic services in addition to traditional medical care. An Adult Daycare Center, a Community Center and a Childcare Center are all being planned for future construction in the Haysi Clinic Park.
- D. **Federal Grant Approved for Assisted Living Center in Dickenson County** – In June, I visited Haysi to announce \$25,000 in federal funding to conduct a feasibility study directed toward the creation of an assisted living facility to be located in the former Donnkenny building. The Town of Haysi will use the funding to determine the need and appropriateness of locating an assisted living center to serve all of Dickenson County. The Center would provide comprehensive health care, personal care, housing and social services for elderly or disabled citizens who require a more limited level of assistance than that which is administered in a nursing home.



- E. New Beginnings Receives Federal Grant to Establish a Drug Treatment Facility in Lee County** – The federal government is providing \$375,000 to the New Beginnings of Southwest Virginia organization to purchase an existing facility in Lee County which will serve as a residential alcohol and drug dependence center for Southwest Virginia. The new facility will be an asset to Lee County and will enable individuals with dependence problems to have a second chance at a healthy lifestyle.
- F. Feasibility Study to Be Conducted for an Assisted Living Facility in the Town of Wise** – Earlier this year, I announced a federal grant in the amount of \$25,000 to the Freewill Baptist Ministries to conduct a feasibility study in the Town of Wise for an assisted living facility. The facility is expected to contain 42 separate residential care units with a nurses' station and support space for administrative and medical staff. The facility which is being designed will also offer a dining room, kitchen, lobby, lounge area and activity center.
- G. Federal Grant Enables Expansion of Bland County Medical Clinic** – At my request, the federal government in 2004 provided a \$1.2 million grant to expand the Bland County Medical Clinic. The funding will enable the Clinic to double the number of examination rooms, expand the waiting room, buy new computers and hire new staff including a new nurse practitioner and two registered nurses. In addition, the Clinic, which bills some low-income patients on a sliding fee scale, will be able to offer its services to people without health insurance. The grant will also enable the clinic to send sliding fee patients to specialists such as cardiologists.
- H. Rural Appalachian Model Medical Education Program Launched** – In July, I announced a federal grant in the amount of \$82,745 to the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) in Blacksburg to enable the launch of the Rural Appalachian Model Medical Education Program to benefit hospitals in Buchanan, Lee and Russell Counties and the City of Norton. In November, Congress approved my request for an appropriation of \$150,000 to further support the new initiative. Through the program, VCOM will begin to train new medical students, with the students spending approximately 5 months at either the Buchanan General Hospital, Lee Regional Medical Center, Russell County Medical Center or Norton Community Hospital. The new program will greatly aid our efforts to recruit new physicians to Southwest Virginia.

## IV. OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

- A. **Bill Introduced to Designate New Wilderness and National Scenic Areas in Southwest Virginia** – Earlier this year, I introduced with Senator John Warner the Virginia Ridge and Valley Wilderness and National Scenic Areas Act to designate additional wilderness and national scenic areas on national forest land in Southwest Virginia. The measure would protect approximately 40,000 acres of Southwest Virginia’s national forest land. Wilderness and National Scenic Areas provide protection for the forest’s natural habitat while enabling and encouraging continued use of the areas for outdoor recreational activities such as backpacking, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, hiking, camping and canoeing. Our legislation is broadly supported by local governments and conservation groups throughout the region, and its passage will be a priority of my office during the upcoming session of Congress.
- B. **Hands Across the Mountain Receives Federal Grant to Develop Revitalization Plan for the McClure, Guest River and Upper Powell Watersheds in Dickenson and Wise Counties** – In July, I announced the provision of federal funding in the amount of \$100,000 to the Hands Across the Mountain organization to develop a revitalization plan for the McClure Watershed, which is located in Dickenson County, and the Guest River and Upper Powell Watersheds, which are located in Wise County. Approximately 11,000 residents live within the watersheds which include the communities of Clinchco, Haysi, McClure and Trammel in Dickenson County and the communities of Appalachia, Coeburn, Norton, Pardee, Stonega and Wise in Wise County. The \$100,000 federal grant will be used to initiate a community-wide effort to identify, assess and resolve the environmental problems in the three watersheds.
- C. **Bill to Promote the Greater Use of Coal Introduced** – I have introduced legislation to provide financial incentives to electric utilities which use advanced clean coal technologies in their new electricity generating plants. The measure will benefit the economy of Southwest Virginia’s coal producing counties by encouraging the construction of new coal-fired power plants and increasing the demand for our region’s coal.
- D. **Congress Approves Additional Funding for Bristol Flood Control Project** – At my urging, the Congress has approved legislation which contains a \$500,000 appropriation to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to be used to lessen the flooding of Beaver Creek in downtown Bristol. This latest installment of federal funding brings to \$1,155,000 the total federal investment in the project to date. This latest federal appropriation will be used to complete the design phase of the project. Following its completion, the remaining funding will be used to initiate construction to reduce future flooding of Beaver Creek.

- E. Congress Approves Additional Federal Funding for the Restoration of Ely and Puckett Creeks** – The Congress has approved my request for a \$250,000 federal appropriation to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to continue the Ely and Puckett Creeks restoration project in Lee County. The federal funding will be used to begin the second phase of the restoration project which includes the construction of a water filtration system at Lick Branch and Big Branch in the Puckett Creek basin. The water filtration system will neutralize the acidity of the stream water and enable wildlife to thrive again in the two creeks.
- F. Powell River Restoration Project Receives Federal Boost** – A federal appropriation in the amount of \$200,000 has been approved at my request for the Powell River restoration project. The federal funding will be used to complete feasibility studies for two portions of the Powell River in Lee County. Work is nearing completion for the first feasibility study of the Straight, Reeds, Jones and Cox Creeks. The Corps is currently finalizing a comprehensive plan for the four creeks to restore the stream and to protect the wildlife in the area. Earlier this year, the Corps began a second feasibility study of Jordan Branch and Bundy, Crab Orchard and Pigeon Creeks to determine the level of pollution in these portions of the River, and to develop a plan to rehabilitate those waterways. It is expected that the second feasibility study will be completed in 2007, when the Corps of Engineers will begin the work of rehabilitating the quality of the water in these tributaries of the Powell River.
- G. Effort to Keep Washington and Scott Counties and Bristol, Virginia in MSA with Neighboring Tennessee Localities Succeeds** – At my strong urging, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has agreed to reverse its previous decision to place Virginia localities into smaller separate Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) and remove them from the larger Tennessee based grouping. By keeping the City of Bristol, Virginia and Washington and Scott Counties in the larger MSA with neighboring Tennessee localities, a potential harm to the region's economic development efforts has been avoided.

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